

California Department of
Water Resources' Mission...

*To manage the water of California, in cooperation
with other agencies, to benefit the state's people and
protect, restore and enhance the natural and
human environments.*

Quail Lake



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The State Water Project

Planned, constructed and operated by the California Department of Water Resources, the State Water Project is the largest state-built, multipurpose water project in the U.S. The Project includes 29 storage facilities, 18 pumping plants, four pumping-generating plants, five hydroelectric power plants, and approximately 660 miles of canals and pipelines. Its main purpose is water supply — that is, to divert and store surplus water during wet periods and distribute it to areas of need in Northern California,

the San Francisco Bay area, the San Joaquin Valley, the Central Coast, and Southern California. Other project purposes include flood control, power generation, recreation, fish and wildlife enhancement, and water quality improvement in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta.

Twenty-nine water contractors, the urban and agricultural water agencies that buy water from the State Water Project, have long-term contracts for an ultimate total of just over four million acre-feet a year. Of this amount, approximately 70 percent of this SWP water will go to urban users and 30 percent to agricultural users.

Quail Lake

Quail Lake, located in the Tejon Ranch area of the western Antelope Valley, is one of the 29 storage facilities of the State Water Project. Maintained and operated by the Department of Water Resources, Quail Lake — a pond created by a cataclysmic movement of the San Andres Fault ages ago — was enlarged to move water safely across the infamous fault.

As part of the West Branch of the State Water Project, the lake provides regulatory water storage for power generation at Warne Powerplant during peak demand periods. When water is released from the lake, it flows from the lake through the Lower Quail Canal and enters the Peace Valley Pipeline. The pipeline then takes the water over five miles to the Warne Powerplant for electric energy production.



History and Environment

Before European settlers arrived, Native Americans camped on the banks of what is now Quail Lake. Still visible are bedrock mortars used by the early inhabitants to grind nuts and berries. The Spaniards led by Captain Pedro Fages came later, leaving present-day names like Tejon (Badger) and La Canada de las Uvas (Grapevine Pass). It was not until 1846 that General Jose Maria Flores formed La Liebre Ranch with a land grant from Pio Pico, California's last Mexican governor. Another general, Edward F. Beale, bought the property in 1855, shaping it into a 297,000-acre ranch still known today as Tejon Ranch.

Recreation and Wildlife

About 10,000 people fish at the lake annually. Thousands more come to hike, watch birds and savor the great outdoors. Although small compared to nearby Pyramid and Castaic lakes, Quail Lake's 290 acres and three miles of shoreline offer fine shoreline fishing. Striped bass, channel catfish, blackfish, tule perch, threadfin shad, and hitch have been found at Quail Lake.



At Quail Lake, tule perch and striped bass are the dominant species.



Quail Lake is on the West Branch of the California Aqueduct.

Fishing sites are accessible from a parking lot off Highway 138, about three miles from Interstate 5.

The rugged terrain bordered by the Tehachapi and Liebre Mountains supports many kinds of wildlife. Stands of cottonwood and oak mark the wedge-shaped plain. This is also the range of fox, coyote, deer, squirrel, and pronghorn antelope, recently reintroduced to the area after 60 years. The lake offers a haven for migratory waterfowl such as Canada geese, egrets and blue herons. Bird watchers can also spot crested sparrows, red-winged blackbirds and occasionally golden eagles and red-tailed hawks.

Swimming and boating are not permitted, but there are picnic tables and rest room facilities at the parking lot. Food and lodging are available four miles away in the town of Gorman.



Canada geese are found at Quail Lake.

Information

Located about 45 miles northwest of Lancaster and 70 miles north of downtown Los Angeles, the lake is open from sunrise to sundown. To get there from Interstate 5, take the Quail Lake Road/Highway 138 off-ramp. For more complete recreation information, call the DWR Southern Field Division at (805) 257-3610.



Quail Lake is located in Southern California.

Statistics

Lake	
Shoreline length	3 miles
Surface area	290 acres
Storage volume	7,580 acre-feet
Lower Quail Canal	
Height	40 feet
Elevation.	3330 feet

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